

TUSLA PRE- REGISTRATION REGULATORY INSPECTION REPORT

Inspection Due to a Proposed Change of Circumstances



Tusla I.D:	TU2023DY002							
Name of Service	First Steps Academy							
Address of Service:	Churchwell Gardens, Belmayne, Dublin 13, D13 HXR8							
Email Address:	churchwell@firststepsacademy.ie							
Name of Registered Provider:	Shirley Flannery							
Type of Proposed Service:	Full Day Care	✓	Part-Time	✓	Sessional	✓		
	Drop-In		Childminding		Temporary			
Proposed change:	Proposal to increase the number of children, from 101 children to 134 children with the addition of a new care room.							
Proposed Number of Children:	134							
Recommended Change Following Inspection:	132 children following a review a Regulation 29(e)							
Registered change:	Change in number of children from 101 to 132 children							
Date of Inspection:	0	7	1	0	2	0	2	5
Inspection undertaken by:	T. Nelson							
Title:	Early Years Inspector							
Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Address:	Early Years Inspectorate, 2nd Floor, Unit 4/5, The Nexus Building, Blanchardstown Corporate Park, Ballycoolin Dublin 15 D15 CF9K							

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Rationale for Inspection:
Proposed Change of Circumstance

Note: For Office use only, to be completed by Registration Office

Registration Status:	Registered Full Day, Part-Time & Sessional Service for 132 Children
Date of Registration	24th October 2025

Authority to Inspect

The Tusla Early Years Inspectorate carries out inspections of Early Years Services under Section 58(D) of the Child Care Act 1991 (as inserted by Section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013).

Description of Service	First Steps Academy is a full day care service located in a residential area of Dublin 13 and is currently registered to provide early childhood care and education to a maximum of 101 children aged 1 to 6 years old, Monday to Friday. The service operates an Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme sessional service in the morning and in the afternoon. The service is one of two services operated locally by the registered provider.
Premises	First Steps Academy currently operates from a purpose-built premises on the ground floor of an apartment building. The service has five care rooms. These include the Boo Boo Bears Room (1 to 2 years old), Snuggle Bears room (1 to 2 years old), Cub Bears room (2 to 3 years old) all providing full day care. Teddy Bears and Panda bears room (2 to 5 years old) offer both sessional and full day care. There are sanitary facilities located off each of the care rooms, and a cot room located off Boo Boo Bears room. Further sanitary facilities are available for staff. Two fully enclosed outdoor areas are located to each side of the premises. It is proposed to open an additional sessional care room on the first floor from 9.00am to 12.00pm where there is currently a school aged care service in operation in the afternoons.
Staffing	The registered provider proposes to employ up to 16 staff to care for the children, including the person in charge, a deputy person in charge, and 14 childcare staff to work directly with the children. The registered provider does not work in the service. There were 16

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	adults present on the day of the inspection including the registered provider, the director of operations, two management staff and 12 staff working in the care rooms.
Methodology	<p>The inspection was an announced inspection to assess compliance with the Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 and Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) (Amendment) Regulations 2016. The Inspection focused on regulations under the following themes: Governance, Health, Welfare and Development of the child, Safety and Premises.</p> <p>The findings on inspection based on information obtained through examination of documentation, direct observation, and discussion with relevant staff are documented in the inspection report and taken into consideration when making a decision in relation to registering the change in circumstance. The Inspectorate reserves the right to edit responses received for reasons including clarity; completeness; and compliance with administrative and legal processes. The contents of the report are compiled by the inspectorate body.</p>
Acknowledgements	The Inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part III - Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and Recruitment

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that—

(a) the service has a designated person in charge and a named person who is able to deputise as required.

Requirement met:

The requirement is met.

(1)

(a) There is a designated person in charge and a person available to deputise as required.

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Part III - Management and Staff

Regulation 11 -Staffing Levels

(1) Subject to this Regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that there is at all times an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

Requirement met:

The requirement is met.

- (1) The registered provider will ensure that an adequate number of adults will work directly with the children attending the service. It is proposed that there will be up to 16 adults caring for up to 101 children on a full day care basis plus an additional 33 children on a sessional basis.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 - Facilities for Rest and Play

- (1) Subject to this Regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that—*
- (a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and*
 - (b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.*
- (3) A registered provider of a full day care service, a part-time day care service or a childminding service, other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, shall ensure that—*
- (a) a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises or*
 - (b) where no such space is provided, the preschool children attending the service have access on a daily basis to an outdoor service*

Requirement met:

The requirement is met.

- (1)
- (a) The proposed new care room will provide adequate and suitable facilities for the sessional care of children in the 2 to 6 years age range to play indoors.
- There are defined areas of interest in the room.
 - There is an adequate supply of toys and resources available to support a range of play experiences.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Furniture in the room is suitable for the age and stage of development of the proposed children. • Toys and equipment are stored on shelving and are visible and accessible to the children. • The equipment available to the children will provide them with challenging play experiences. <p>(b) There is a cosy area available in the care room where children can take a break from activities and rest.</p> <p>(3)</p> <p>(a) There is an outdoor play area available to the side of the premises which is fully enclosed. A range of outdoor toys to facilitate physical play experiences for the proposed age range is available.</p>
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Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and Drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Requirement met:

The requirement is met.

- A snack will be provided by parents.
- There is documentary evidence that parents will be advised not to supply perishable food items for snacks.
- There is a healthy eating policy in place.
- Drinking water is available in the care room.

Part VI – Safety

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Regulation 23 - *Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child*

A registered provider shall ensure that all reasonable measures are taken to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of a pre-school child attending the service and that the environment of the service is safe.

Requirement met:	<p>The requirement is partially met.</p> <p>The following is an example of the measures taken to safeguard children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play materials are safe and suitable for use. • A risk assessment is available for the proposed indoor and outdoor play area identifying potential hazards. • Cleaning products are stored out of reach of children. • Appropriate waste disposal units are available in the sanitary areas. • Thermostatically controlled warm water is available for handwashing. • Emergency exits are clearly indicated and are unobstructed.
Requirement not met:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The tall storage units in the hallway outside the care room are not secured to the wall and are a potential injury risk to children should they climb on them.
Response from Provider:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Works were completed and the storage units are now secured to the wall.
Summary Comment:	The requirement is met.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 25 – First Aid

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a person trained in first aid for children is, at all times, immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service.

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that a suitably equipped first aid box for children—

- (a) is safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises, and*
- (b) is available to the children attending the pre-school service at all times.*

Requirement met:	The requirement is met.
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| | <p>(1) Documentary evidence is available that there will be a staff member trained to First aid Responder level available to the children during the operational hours of the service.</p> <p>(2)</p> <p>(a) A suitably equipped first aid box is stored in the care room.</p> <p>(b) The first aid boxes are easily accessible and available to adults.</p> |
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Part VI – Safety

Regulation 26 – Fire Safety Measures

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of—
- (a) any fire drill that takes place in the premises, and
 - (b) the number, type and maintenance record of fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire shall be displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.

Requirement met:

The requirement is met.

- (1) A record of the following is available:
- (a) There is a template available to record fire drills that take place in the service.
 - (b) A written record is available to demonstrate the firefighting equipment in the premises was maintained in October 2024 and the smoke alarms were maintained in July 2025.
- (4) There are notices displayed throughout the premises of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire with a clear route indicated to the fire assembly point.

Part VI – Safety

Regulation 28 – Insurance

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A registered provider shall ensure that the pre-school service is adequately insured.

Requirement met:

The requirement is met.

The registered provider has evidence of insurance for a maximum of 134 children in a full day care service valid from 29 September 2025 to 27th March 2026.

The registered provider must ensure that adequate insurance is in place prior to the commencement of the change. The change approval is contingent on the registered providers compliance with Regulation 28.

Part VII – Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 – Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are—

- (a) of sound and stable structure,*
- (b) safe and secure,*
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated,*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Requirement met:

The requirement is partially met.

(a) The premises appears to be of a sound and stable structure.

(b) The entrance door to the service is secured adequately to prevent children from exiting unsupervised and unauthorised persons from gaining access. There is a magnetic lock system in place. Entry is by face recognition and is managed and monitored by staff. The door release button is up high out of reach of children.

(c)

- Windows provide natural lighting to the care room. The natural light can be augmented with artificial ceiling lighting as required. Ceiling lights are recessed and fitted with protective covers.
- Heating is provided by wall mounted radiators. The temperature of the care room on the day of the inspection was maintained between 18 and 22°C.
- The proposed care room has openable windows, and the sanitary accommodation is fitted with an operating mechanical ventilation system.

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	<p>(d) The care room is clean, maintained and in good repair. There is a cleaning schedule available to ensure regular cleaning of the room.</p> <p>(e)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is adequate and suitable sanitary accommodation for the proposed number of staff. There are 2 staff toilets. One toilet and one sink are required in sanitary accommodation for every 8 staff. • The toilets available were partitioned with doors to allow privacy for the children. 															
<p>Requirement not met:</p>	<p>(e)</p> <p>1. There was not an adequate number of toilets available for the proposed 134 children. The details are set out below.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="580 853 1485 1323"> <thead> <tr> <th>Floor:</th> <th>Number of toilets for children:</th> <th>Number of nappy change units for children:</th> <th>Number of sinks for children:</th> <th>Number of children this can accommodate:</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Ground floor</td> <td>6</td> <td>3</td> <td>9</td> <td>99 (33 who are in nappies)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>First floor (proposed new room)</td> <td>1</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>22 (11 who are in nappies)</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One nappy change unit and one sink is required for every 11 children in nappies. • One toilet and one sink is required in sanitary accommodation for every 11 children who are no longer in nappies and use a toilet. <p>2. There are no hand drying facilities in the sanitary facility of the proposed new care room.</p>	Floor:	Number of toilets for children:	Number of nappy change units for children:	Number of sinks for children:	Number of children this can accommodate:	Ground floor	6	3	9	99 (33 who are in nappies)	First floor (proposed new room)	1	1	2	22 (11 who are in nappies)
Floor:	Number of toilets for children:	Number of nappy change units for children:	Number of sinks for children:	Number of children this can accommodate:												
Ground floor	6	3	9	99 (33 who are in nappies)												
First floor (proposed new room)	1	1	2	22 (11 who are in nappies)												
<p>Response from Provider:</p>	<p>1. An additional 2 toilets and sinks were fitted in the proposed care room.</p> <p>2. A paper towel dispense was fitted in the sanitary accommodation.</p>															

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Summary Comment:	The service now has 9 toilets for children and 3 nappy change units, each with appropriate hand washing and hand drying facilities. The requirement is met, with sufficient sanitary accommodation for 132 children.
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Part VII – Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 30 – Minimum Space Requirements

- (1) *Subject to paragraphs (2) to (6), a registered provider shall ensure that adequate clear floor space is available in the premises for the work, play and movement of children attending the pre-school service.*
- (4) *Where a registered provider contemporaneously provides—*
- (a) *a sessional pre-school service, and*
 - (b) *a full day care service or a part-time day care service, or both, the minimum clear floor space applicable for the duration of the sessional preschool service in respect of the children attending that service shall be the floor space specified in paragraph (3).*

Requirement met:	<p>The requirement is met.</p> <p>(1) There is adequate clear floor space available in the new care room for the work, play and movement of the 33 children proposed to attend the pre-school service on a sessional basis. A total of 107 square metres is available.</p> <p>(4) The minimum clear floor space of 1.818m² is available for each child attending.</p>
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